album express™

A simple album design solution for professionals.

User's Guide
Album Express 5

www.SPC-international.com

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1.0 Introduction

"Album Express 4" Professional is stand-alone software specifically designed to expedite the creation and the layout process of high quality professional digital photo albums.

Album Express can quickly and easily help you create complete professional digital photo albums just by using its ready-to-use wide range of templates, masks, frames, backgrounds, and its built in text and effects editors. It is so simple to learn and use that no special artistic skills are required!

Album Express, unlike other traditional imaging software that are complex and can reduce your productivity, is so easy to use that you will be able to create professional photo album layouts in just a few minutes! With Album Express, you will save so much time that the software will pay for itself after just one use! And because you will be able to customize and personalize your own templates, your creations will always be distinguishable and unique! Any album page you build with Album Express can be saved as a template and reused for future projects, so your custom library will increase exponentially as you use the product!

Album Express can convert a selection of your images into unique photo collages instantly. Then re-organize, crop, color, balance, and package your composition as your creative talents and imagination will allow. Entire Album Design projects can be reused over and over again with different photos, saving you valuable time and effort.

Album Express can be linked to any external photo editor(s) of your preference: like Photoshop, Lightroom, Aperture, Nikon NX2, Corel Photo Paint, etc., leveraging your exiting software investment whether you own a PC or a Mac.

Album Express is the perfect design solution for magazine, flush mount, scrapbooks and even matted albums. Album Express is so much more than an album design tool. It can easily be used for Signature Studio Prints, Collages, Stationary, Sports Trader Cards, Custom Studio Proof Prints and any other product where you wish to combine multiple images, masks, borders, and frames.

Album Express has been designed for discriminating photographer who wishes to provide that personal and creative touch to his/her album creations.

2.0 Getting started and System Requirement

It is very important to set the working environment of Album Express before we actually use it for making our Album pages.

• After the successful installation of Album Express, insert the USB dongle.

• Set the minimum Resolution Monitor to 1024 x 768 pixels.

The instructions for installation an application onto Windows Vista and Windows 7

The following procedures have got to be made in order to get to work software correctly:

1.Parental protection.

Regarding Windows Vista.

You should do following:

* go to the Control Panel;
* User Accounts;
* Parental Controls;
* Family safety options and set to NEVER.

Regarding Windows 7.

You should do following:

* go to the Control Panel;
* User Account and Parental Controls;
* User's Account;
* Change the settings of your User Account;
* take and drag the cursor down;
* click "OK".

2. Run application as administrator.

*Click with the right key of the mouse on the folder of application and set – Run as administrator.

3. Quick Time. Our software requests Quick time version 7.6 or later.

* Update or install Quick Time.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS - WINDOWS PLATFORM

- Operating System Windows 2000 Service Pack 4 or higher
- QuickTime 7.6 or higher
- 2GB RAM (Recommended 4GB)
- Pentium 4 or higher recommended

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS - MACINTOSH PLATFORM

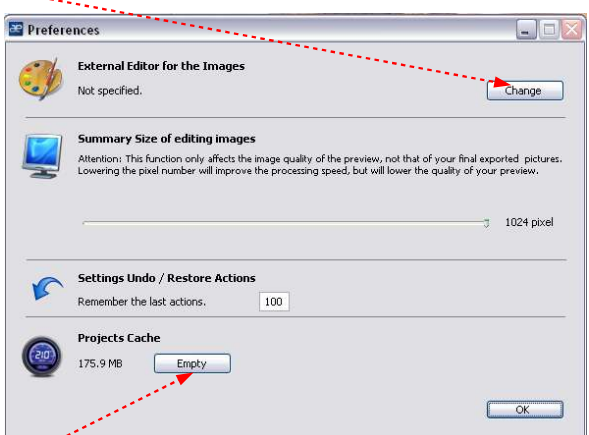
- Operating System Mac OS X 10.4.11 or higher
- 2GB RAM (Recommended 4GB)
- PowerPC G5 or Intel Core Recommended
- HD 40 GB (Recommended SATA 7200RPM Speed)

- Setting the Preference of Album Express.

2.1 How to set the Preference of Album Express

Open Album Express. Go File - Edit – Preferences. The window of the preferences opens. You can set the resolution and the number of the last actions which were saved in the memory.

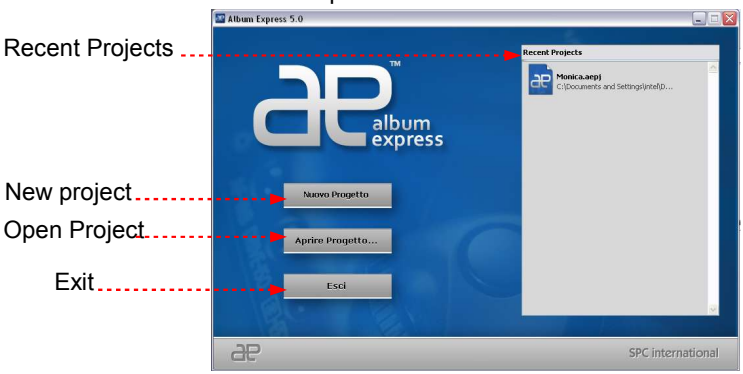
To connect Album Express with an external editor click the button Change. Select an external editor which you like to connect Album Express with.


Preferences
External Editor for the Images
Not specified.
Change
Summary Size of editing images
Attention: This function only affects the image quality of the preview, not that of your final exported pictures. Lowering the pixel number will improve the processing speed, but will lower the quality of your preview.
1024 pixel
Settings Undo / Restore Actions
Remember the last actions.
100
Projects Cache
175.9 MB
Empty
OK

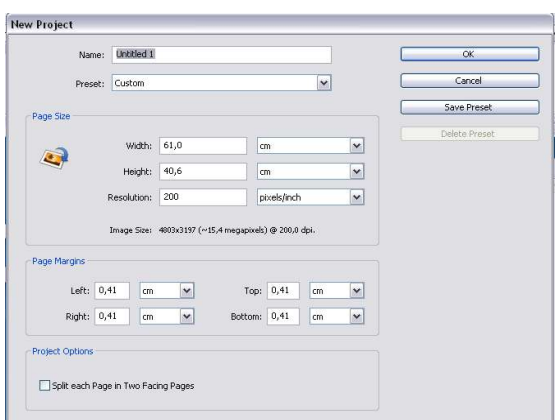
Use the button Empty to delete the files of temporarily saved projects.

3.0 Workflow of Album Express

After the successful installation of Album Express, insert the USB dongle. Click on the icon of Album Express.
The interface of the software opens.



Click the button “New Project” and the dimension window opens.

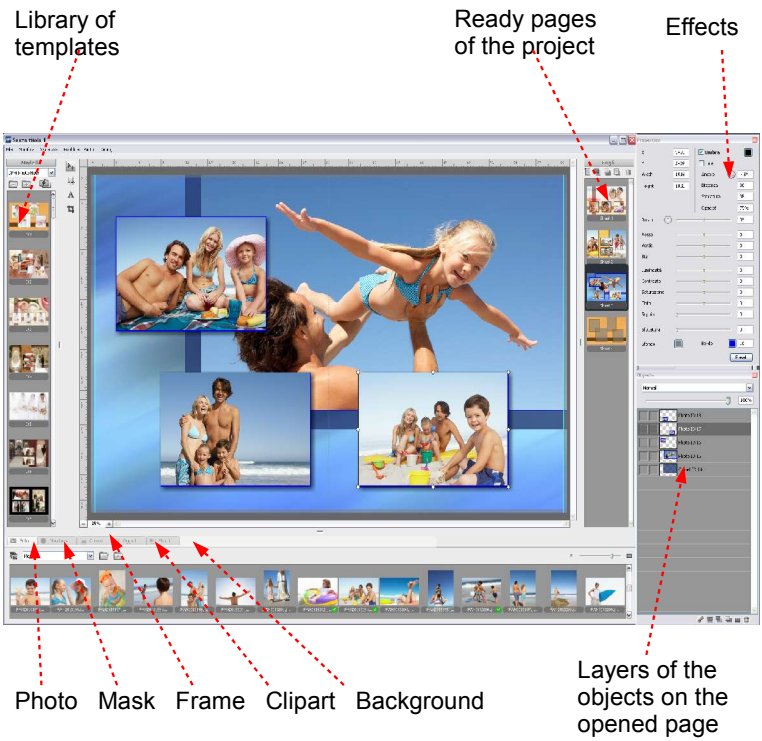


You can choose the size from custom sizes or create own one writing the desired values in the voices Width, Height and Resolution.

When you want to add your new dimension as custom click the button Save Preset. You will find your new dimension in the list of the custom dimensions at the next opening of “Album Express”.

When the dimension of the new project has been chosen the workflow of Album Express is opened.

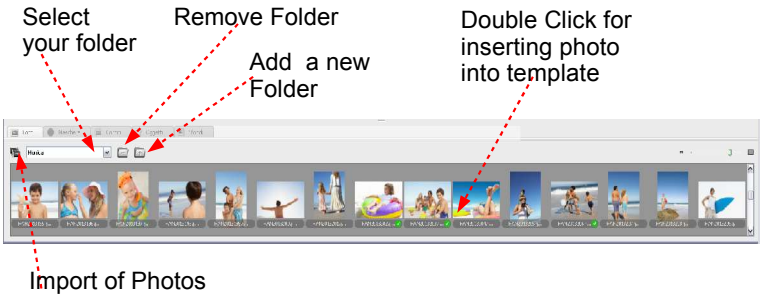
Choose a folder of the template from the library of them. Double click on the thumbnail of one. It opens on the work space of “Album Express”.



4.0 Five major sections of Album Express

4.1 Photo

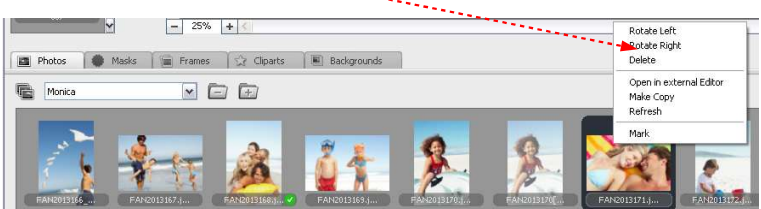
Open Album Express. The section photo opens as default.



To import your photos into “Album Express” do following:
* click button Add a new folder;
* select that created folder;
* click the button Import of Photos;
* choose desired photo/photos and click OK.

The thumbnails of all imported photos will be created and showed in the window of the Photo Section.

Click on thumbnail of a photo by the right key of the mouse for opening this Menu



Choosing the voice Open in external Editor the photo will be opened in the external editor which Album Express was connected.

4.1.1 How to add a photo to the current page

To insert the photo into photo object:
- Select a photo object on the template.

To select the photo object click on it in the opened template or select the layer of it in the window “Objects”.
- Double click on the thumbnail of the photo.

It will be resized and inserted into selected photo object automatically.
To insert a photo into photo object without importing it in Album Express double click on the photo object and choose the direction where desired photo is.

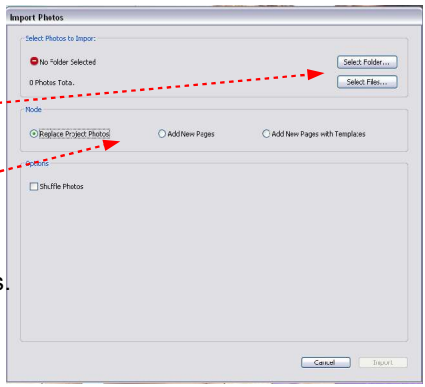
To insert the photo as a new photo object:
- take the thumbnail of the photo and drag it onto template;
- don't select any photo object on the template and double click of the thumbnail of the photo. It will be inserted on the template as a new photo object.

The new layer will be created in the window “Objects”.

Note: changing the size of the photo object the inserted photo is never distorted.

4.1.2 The function of Auto Insert of the photos

Go to File - Auto Insert...
The following window opens

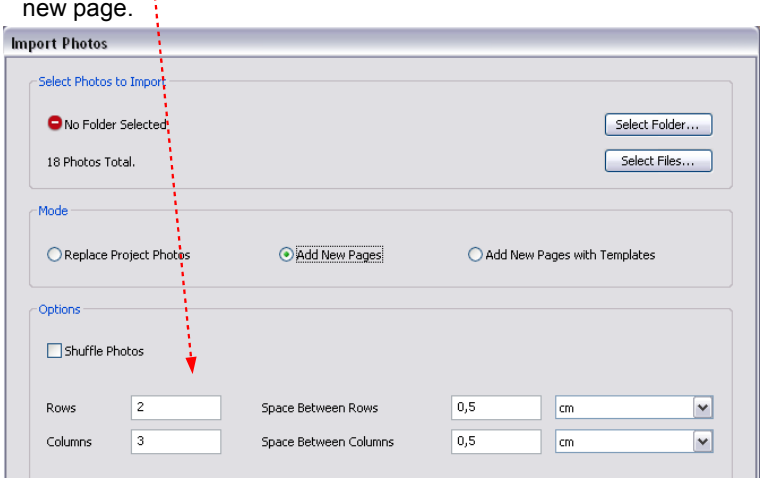


1. Select photo files

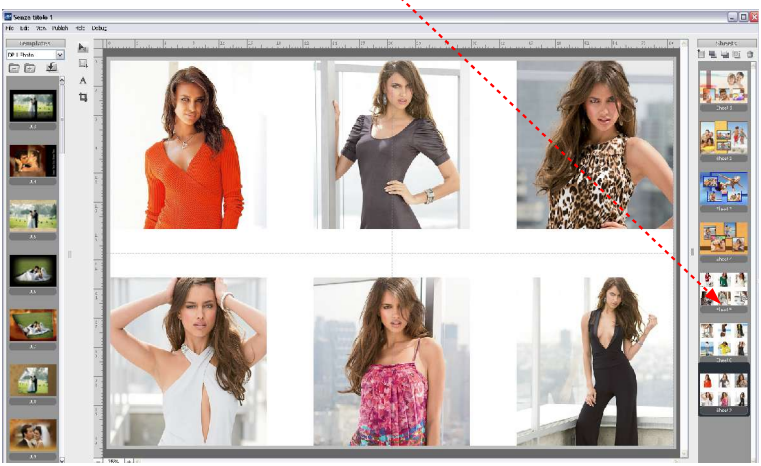
2. Choose mode:
   * Replace Project Photos;
   * Add New Pages;
   * Add Pages with Templates.

Choosing the mode Replace Project Photos all photos in the opened project will be substituted with the new selected ones.

Choosing the mode Add New Pages you can decide the number of the Rows and Columns and the space between them on every new page.



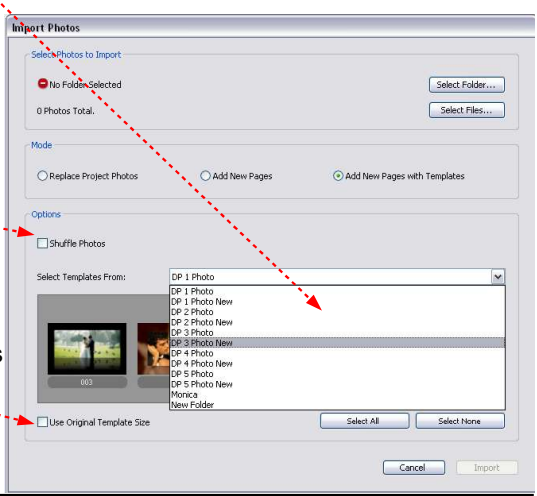
Click button Start and the new pages are created and the photos are inserted.



Choosing the mode Add New Pages with Templates you have to choose the folder of the templates and select desired ones.

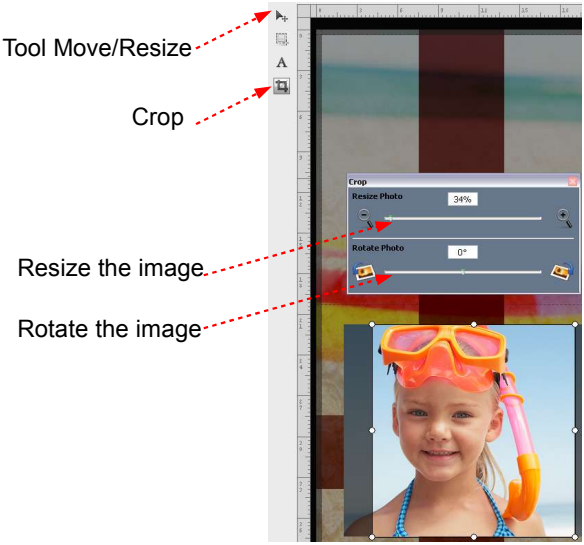
To insert the photos in Shuffle way click here

To use the original size of the templates click here.

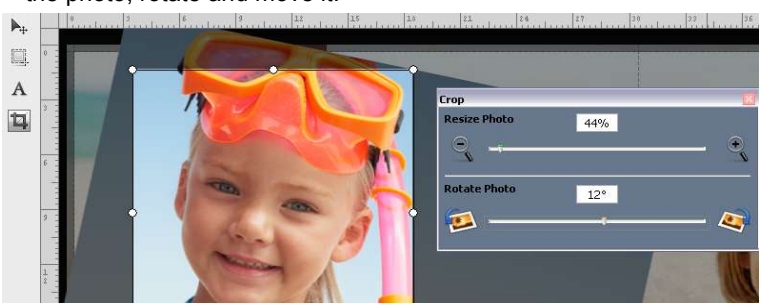


4.1.3 How to resize and rotate the inserted photo

When you need to resize or rotate the inserted photo inside of the photo object you have to click the icon “Crop” on the left part of the template.



Using the Crop tools from the Crop window it is possible to resize the photo, rotate and move it.



When the work about the photo is finished click the icon Move/Resize in order to go back to the photo object.

4.1.4 How to resize a photo object

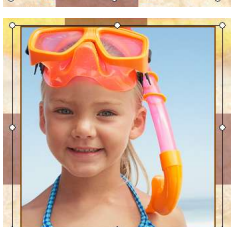
The photo object can be resized in following ways:

1. Take and drag one corner of the photo object.
In this case only two sides of the photo object are expanded.

2. Hold the key SHIFT on the keyboard and take and drag one corner of the photo object.
In this case all four sides of the photo object are expanded.

3. Take and drag one side of the photo object.
In this case only one side of the photo object is expanded.

4. Hold the key SHIFT on the keyboard and take and drag one side of the photo object.
In this case two opposite sides of the photo object are expanded.

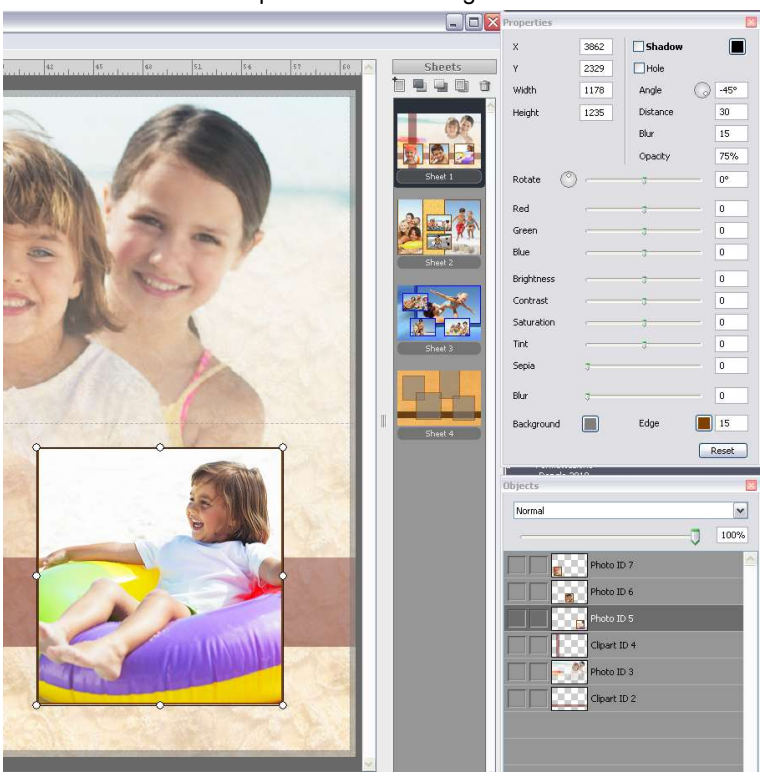


Note: The photo inside of the photo object is never distorted.

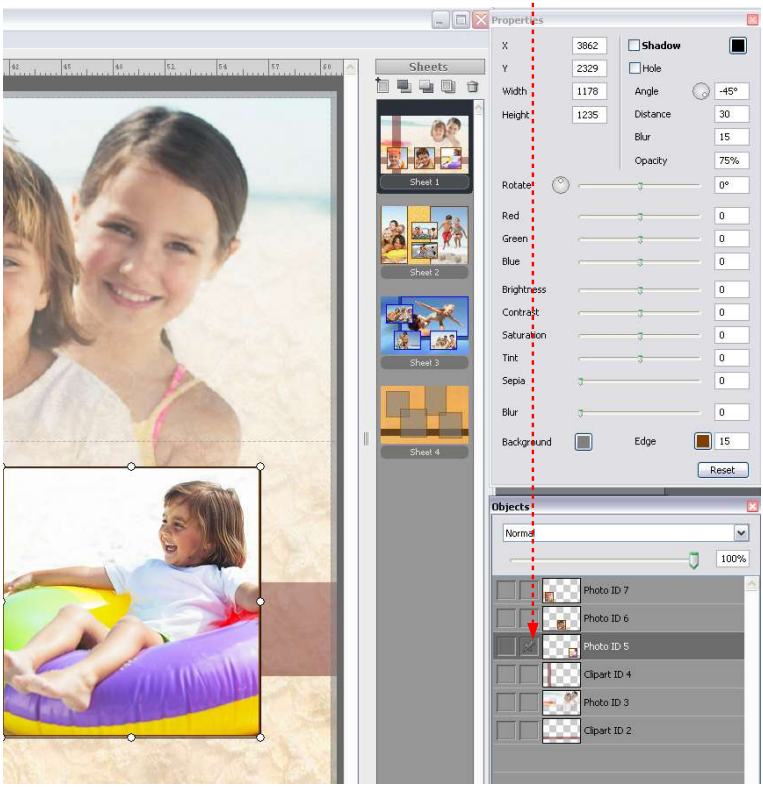
4.1.5 How to add some effect, shadow and rotate selected photo object

Select a photo object clicking on it in the template or clicking on its layer in the window “Objects”.
The window Property shows all values of selected photo object. Using the tools which are presented in the window Property it is possible to add the shadow, rotate, add an edge and apply some desired effect to the selected photo object.

Note: using the tools from window Property you can change the position and values only of the photo object. The position and the values of the inserted photo doesn't change!

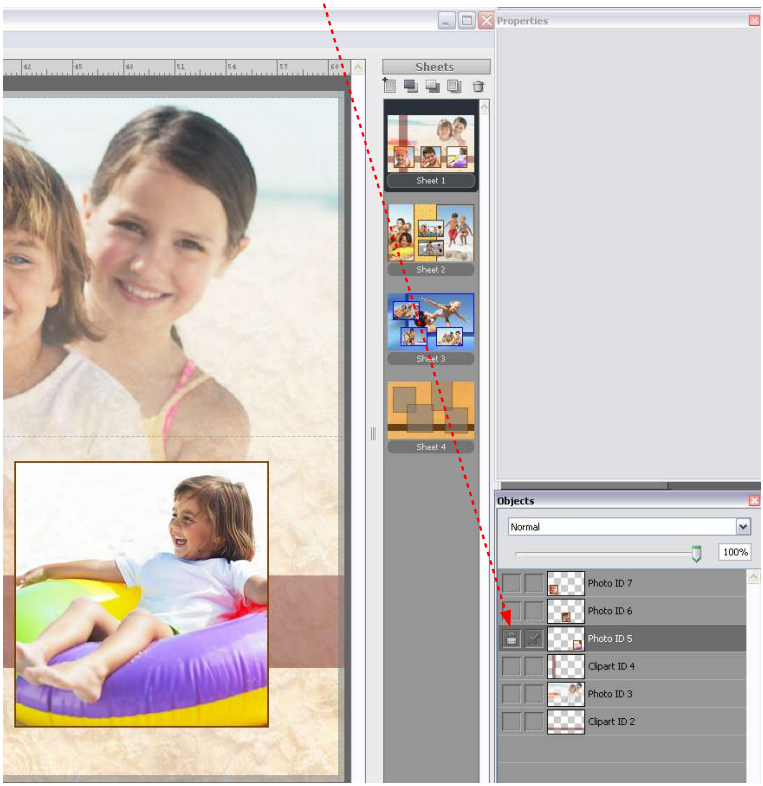


To block the position of the photo object click here



Now it isn't possible to move and to resize that photo object, but it is possible to change the property values using the tools from the window Property.

When all modifies were done this photo object can be blocked provided that you click here.



It isn't possible to do anything with photo object when the layer of the photo object was locked.

Click another time on the lock of that layer in order to unlock it.

4.1.6 How to edit, arrange and move photo object

Click with the right key of the mouse on the photo object in order to open that menu:

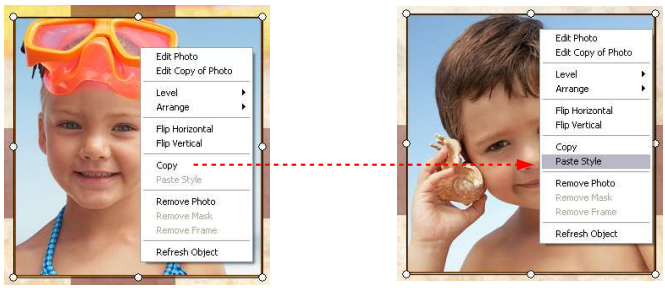
Choosing the voice Edit Photo the photo is opened in the external editor directly. After editing of the photo you return to Album Express and the old photo will be updated with the new.
Choosing the voice Edit Copy of Photo the copy of that photo is opened in external editor for editing. When you return to Album Express the old photo will be substituted with the new one and this new photo will be saved in the Photo folder near the old one.

Choosing voice Level become possible to change the layer position of the photo object.

To arrange the photo objects it is necessary to select all objects (hold the key Shift) which you need to arrange and click on the selected objects with the right key of the mouse. Choose the voice Arrange and choose the type of the arrangement from the submenu.

Choosing the voice Flip Horizontal or Flip Vertical the photo object can be flipped on horizontal or vertical axes.

Choosing the voice Copy Style you copy the style of the selected photo object. Select some other photo object and choose the voice Past Style. The Style from one photo object will be applied onto other one.



Choosing the voice Remuve Photo you can delete the photo from photo object.

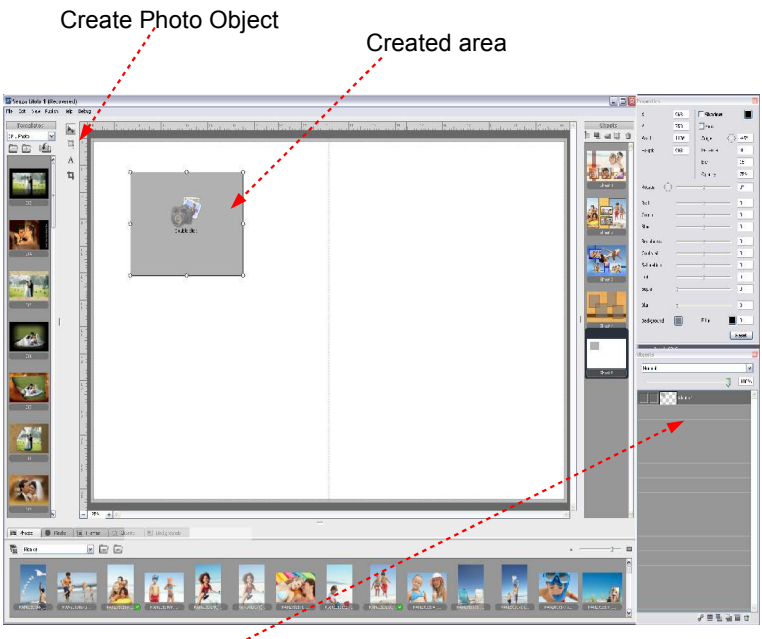
Choosing the voice Remove Mask you can delete the mask from the photo object which was applied before.

Choosing the voice Remove Frame you can delete the frame from the photo object which was applied before.

4.1.7 How to create Photo Object

For creating a photo object in the current page:

1. Select the tool “Create Photo Object” clicking on it by the left key of the mouse.
2. Select the area into template where you want to insert photo.



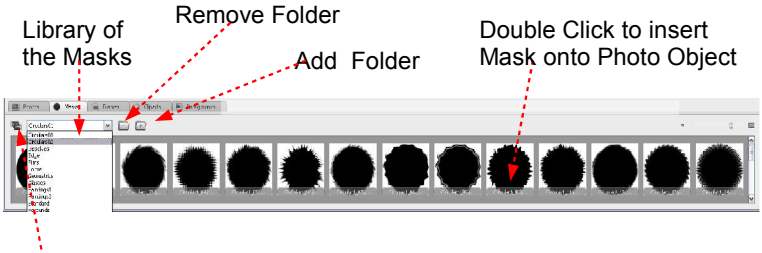
The layer with the photo object will be created in the Layers window automatically.

Double click on a thumbnail of a photo to insert it into created photo object. The photo will be inserted and resized automatically.

To delete the photo object it is necessary to select it clicking on by the left key of the mouse or select the layer of this photo object in the Layer window. It is possible to delete it using the icon Trash in the Layer window or push the key Delete from the Keybord.

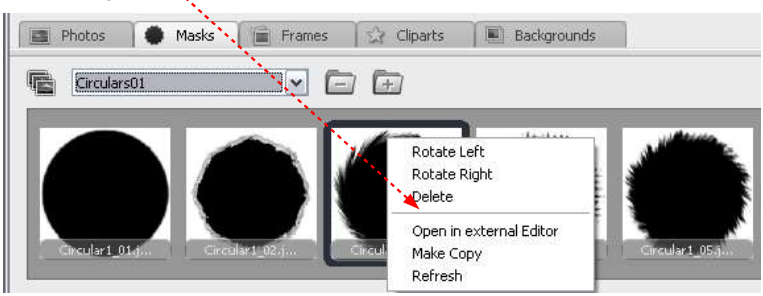
4.2 Masks

The section Masks includes the different types of the masks ready for using.



To apply a mask on the selected photo object double click on a thumbnail of mask. The mask applied onto selected photo object automatically.

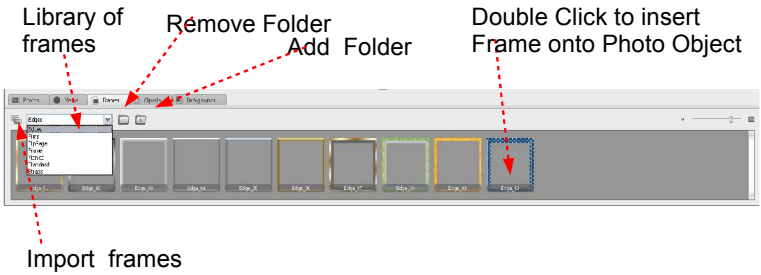
Click on thumbnail of a mask by the right key of the mouse for opening this Menu



This menu allows us:
* rotate it to left (- 90);
* rotate it to right (+ 90);
* delete it from the folder;
* open it with the External Editor which was connected with Album Express;
* create the copy of it;
* update the thumbnail of the mask which was modified.

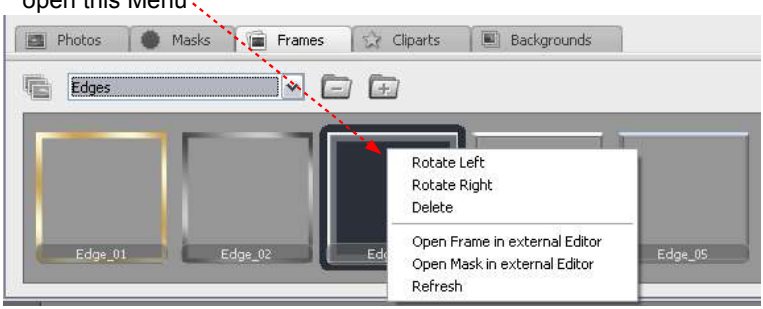
4.3 Frames

The section Frames includes the different types of the frames ready for using.



To apply a frame on the selected photo object double click on a thumbnail of a frame. The frame will be inserted automatically.

Click on a thumbnail of a frame by the right key of the mouse to open this Menu

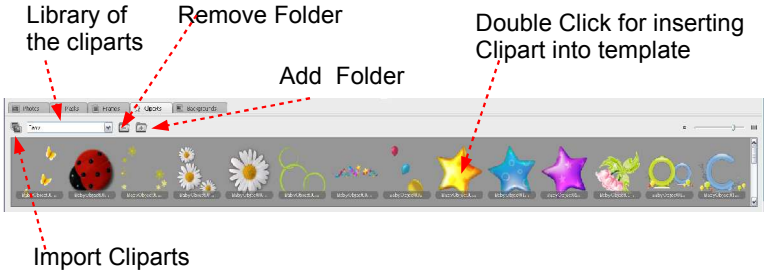


This menu allows us:

* rotate it to left (- 90);
* rotate it to right (+ 90);
* delete it from the folder;
* open Frame with the External Editor which was connected with Album Express;
* open Mask with the External Editor which was connected with Album Express;
* update the thumbnail of the frame which was modified.

4.4 Cliparts

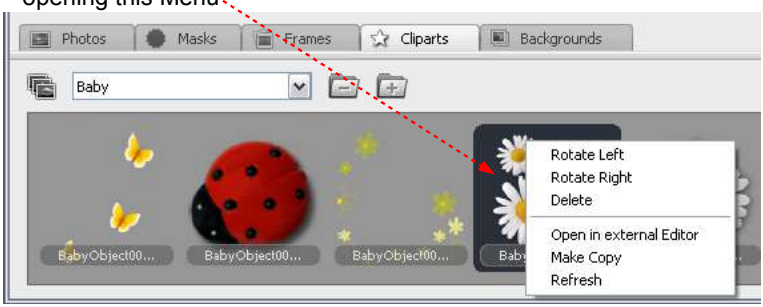
The section Cliparts includes the different types of the cliparts ready for using.



To apply a clipart on the selected photo object double click on a thumbnail of a clipart.

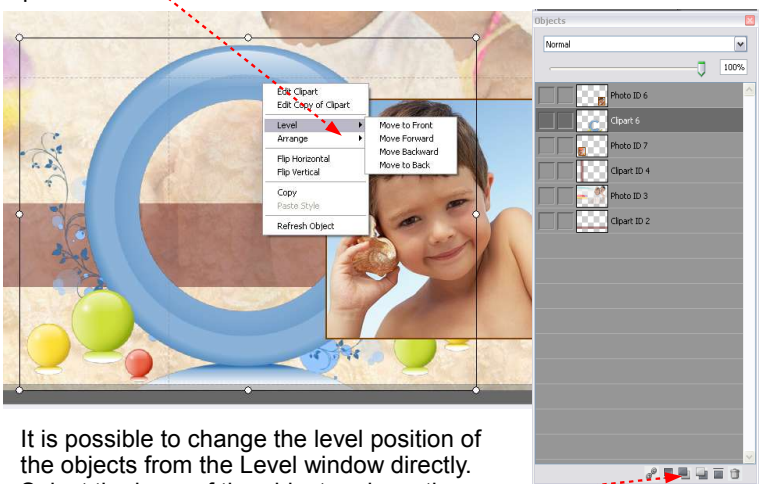
To delete the clipart from the template select clipart and click the key Delete from the keyboard.

Click on thumbnail of a clipart by the right key of the mouse for opening this Menu.



This menu allows us:
* rotate it to left (- 90);
* rotate it to right (+ 90);
* delete it from the folder;
* open it with the External Editor which was connected with Album Express;
* create the copy of it;
* update the thumbnail of the clipart which was modified.

Double click on the thumbnail of the clipart to apply it onto template.
Take and drag on some corner to resize the clipart proportionally.
Take and drag on some side to resize the clipart not proportionally.
Click with the right key of the mouse on it to change the level position of it.

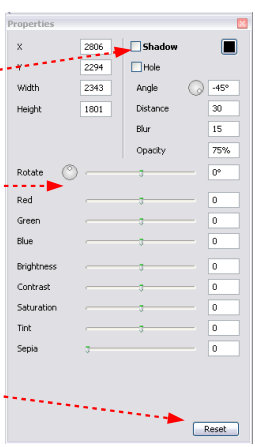


It is possible to change the level position of the objects from the Level window directly. Select the layer of the object and use the buttons down in this window.

It is possible to add a shadow to the clipart using the Properties window.

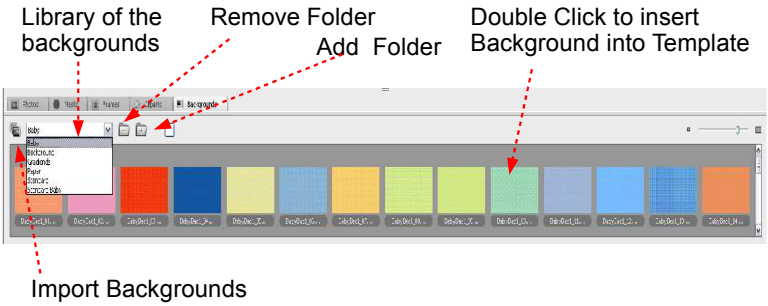
It is possible to edit and rotate selected clipart using the function in the Properties window.

Push the button Reset when you need to turn to the original values of the clipart.



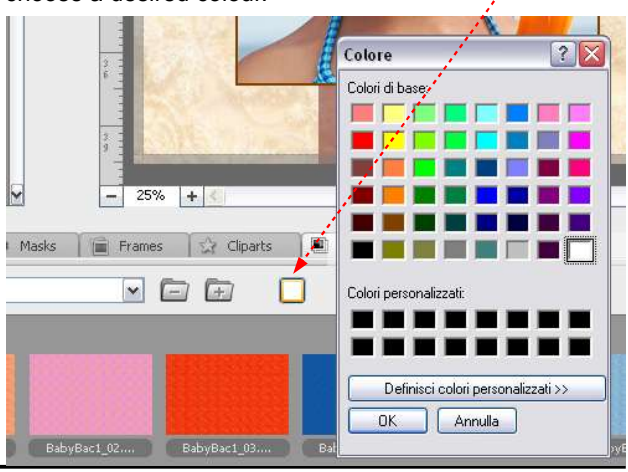
4.5 Backgrounds

The section Backgrounds includes the different types of the backgrounds ready for using.

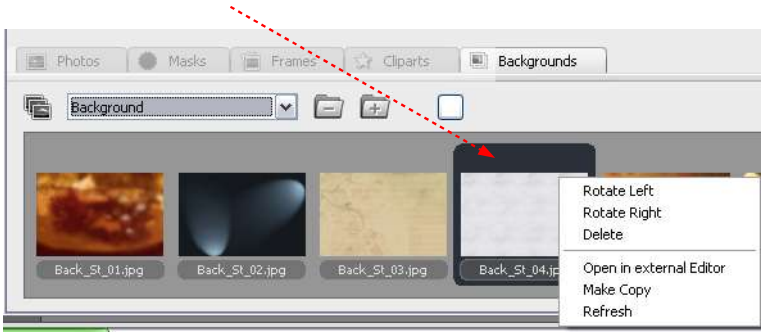


To apply a background on the template double click on a thumbnail of a background.

Note: to apply coloured background click on the button “Colour” and choose a desired colour.



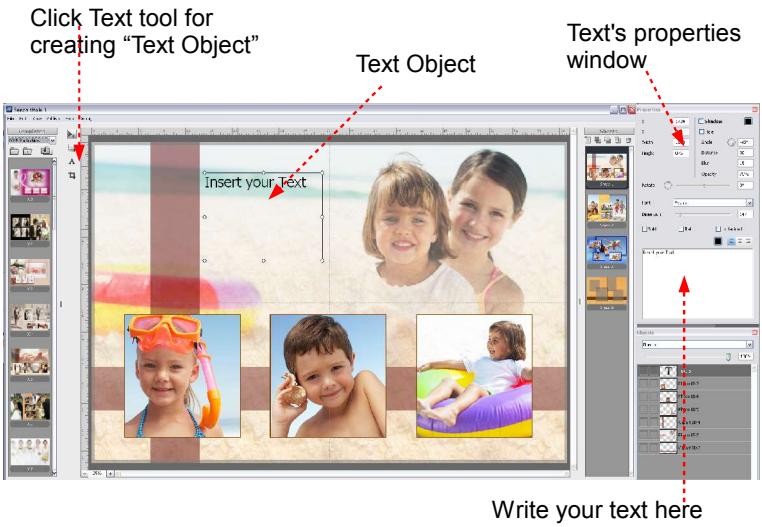
Click on a thumbnail of a background by the right key of the mouse for opening this Menu.



This menu allows us:
* rotate it to left (- 90);
* rotate it to right (+ 90);
* delete it from the folder;
* open it with the External Editor which was connected with Album Express;
* create the copy of it;
* update the thumbnail of the background which was modified.

4.6 Text

The section Text includes the different text tools which allow to write, edit and add text to the current template.



To apply the text on a template do following:
* click Button Text tool;
* create the text object on the template;
* write your text in the text window;
* choose the font, size and colour of the text;
* click button Apply Text.

To delete the text object:
* select it;
* click the key Delete on the keyboard.

It is possible to delete the text object from the Layer's window:
* select text layer;
* click the icon trash.

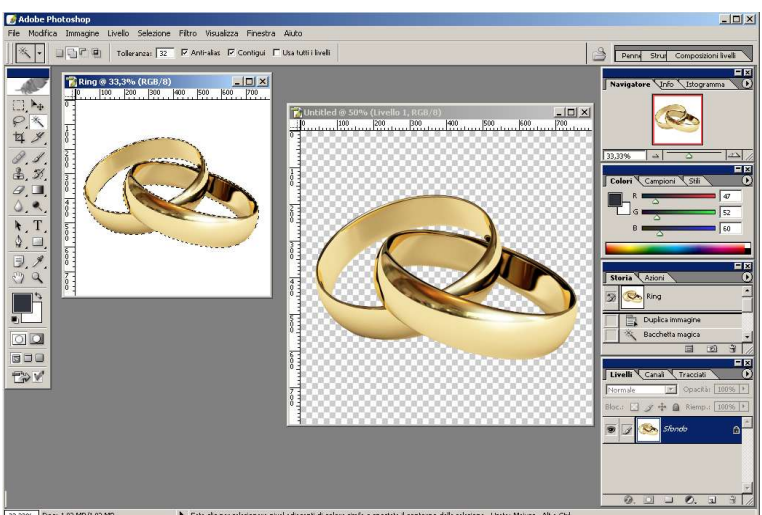
5.0 How to add your own creation - Clip Arts, Frames, Masks, Backgrounds, ready to use templates into Album Express

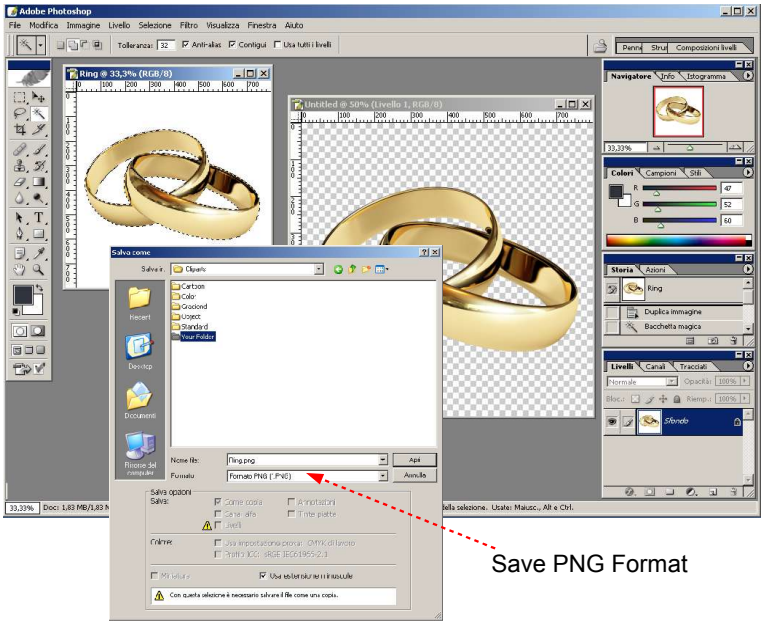
5.1 How to add “Clip Arts”

To add a clipart into "Album Express " as the 1st it is necessary to delete the space around the image which you want to use as an object of “Clipart”.

Please follow these steps in Adobe Photoshop:

1. Open the image which you want to use as a object of clipart in Adobe Photoshop.
2. Select the desired area by tool "Lasso".
3. Copy the selected area. (Ctrl + C)
4. Open a new canvas with a transparent background.
   Set resolution 300 DPI.





5. Paste the selected object into the new canvas. (Ctrl + V).
6. Go to Select Menu > Load Selection.
7. Click OK.
8. Apply Quick Mask. Click on the Edit in Quick Mask Mode Tool from the tool bar.
   Shortcut key is Q.
9. Save the image: File menu > Save As
10. In the activated Save As Dialog box,
    Save in AlbumExpress\Clip Art\Your Folder.

Note: Save it as PNG file format and with Alpha Channels

11. Click Save.

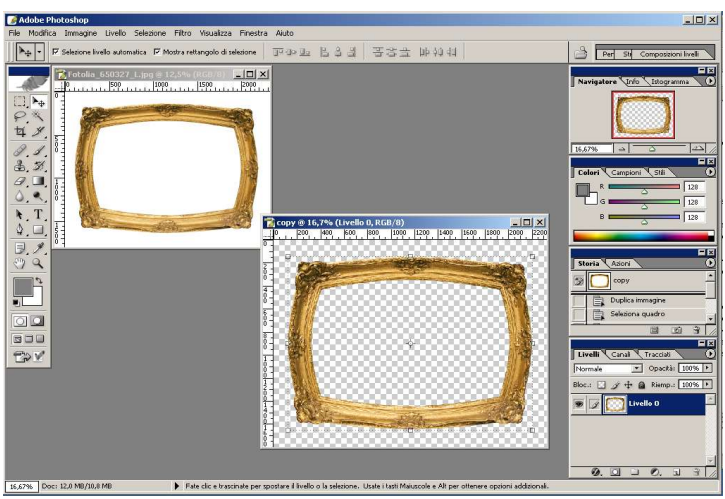
5.2 How to add Frames

To add a frame into "Album Express" as the 1st it is necessary to delete the space around the image which you want to use as a frame in “Album Express”.

Please follow these steps in Adobe Photoshop:

1. Open the desired frame or your creation.
2. Select the frame with the help of Marquee tool.
3. Invert the selection. Select menu > Inverse. (Ctrl +Shift+I)
4. Copy the selected area. (Ctrl + C)
5. Open a new canvas with a transparent background.
   Set resolution 300 DPI.
6. Paste the selected frame into the new canvas. (Ctrl + V).
7. Go to Select Menu > Load Selection.
8. Click OK.
9. Apply Quick Mask. Click on the Edit in Quick Mask Mode tool from the tool bar. Shortcut key is Q.
10. Save the image: File menu > Save As
11. In the activated Save As Dialog box, Save in

HardDisk:AlbumExpress\Frames\SampleFrame\ Sampleframe_overlay.png



Note: Save it as PNG file format and with Alpha Channels.

12. Click Save.

Important Note: You must also save the same frame again in JPEG format!

Please follow these steps in Adobe Photoshop:

13) Select the Canvas with the frame, which you have opened previously. Copy it.

Note: You will get the previous selection.

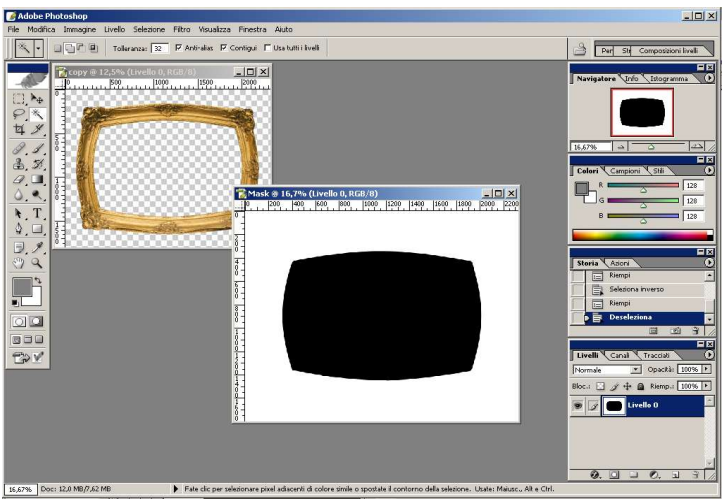
14) Apply solid black colour to the selection so that frame is covered by the black colour. (Set the foreground colour, black) - Edit Menu > Fill. Foreground colour

15) Save the image, File menu > Save As

16) In the activated Save As Dialog box, Save in

HardDisk:AlbumExpress\Frames\SampleFrame\ Sampleframe_Mask.jpg

17) Click Save.



Note: Save it as the file JPEG format with the same file name.

5.3 How to add Mask

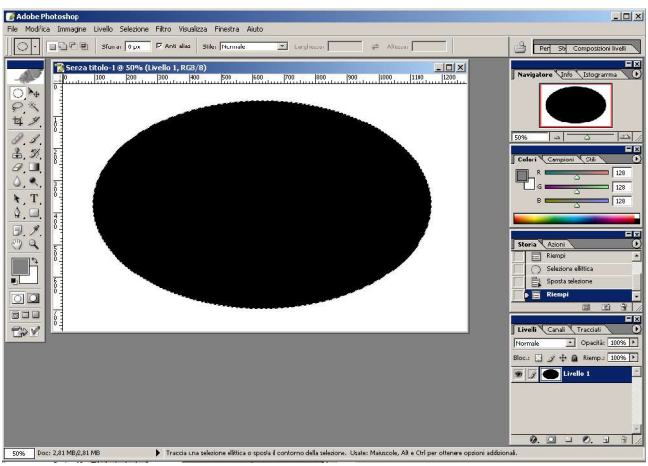
To add your own Mask in Album Express you have to keep the desired portion as Black (colour),where the image has to be seen and the border/outline of the Mask must be White.

Follow these steps to create a Mask in Adobe Photoshop and add it into “Album Express”:

1. Open the new canvas.
   Here 1500x1500 Pixels, Resolution and set
   Mode-Grayscale in the New Canvas Dialog box and set
   background Black.
2. Trace an Oval in the new canvas with the Elliptical Marquee tool.
3. Invert the selection. Select Menu > Inverse (Crtl+Shift+I)
4. Apply solid black colour to the selection so that the selection is filled by the White colour. (Set the foreground colour, black) - Edit Menu > Fill.
5. Save the image, File menu > Save As
6. In the activated Save As Dialog box, Save in

HardDisk:\AlbumExpress\Mask\YourFolder\Mask.jpg

7. Click Save.



Note: Save it as JPEG file format.

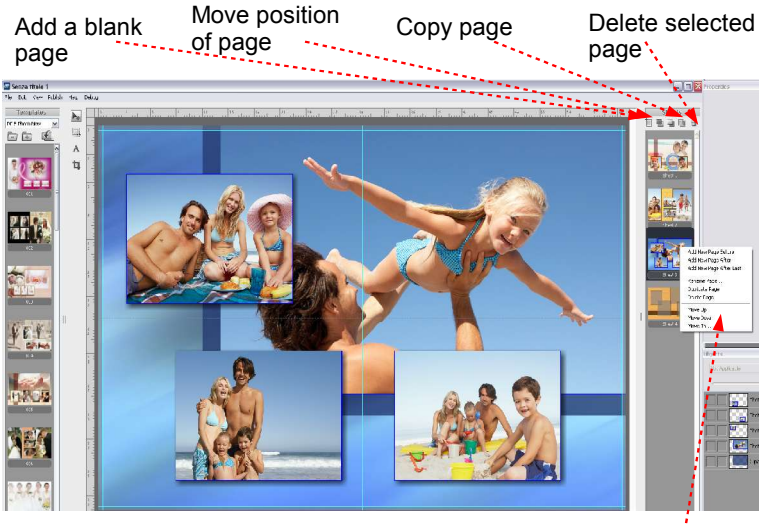
6.0 How to add/delete and arrange a page in the storyboard

To change the position of ready page use the buttons “Send backward page” and “Bring forward Page”

To add a blank page click on the button “Add a blank page”.

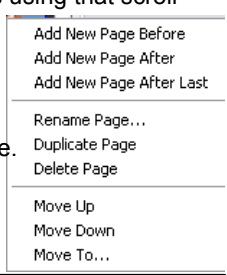
To rename a ready page click on it by the right key of the mouse and type a new name in the opened window.

To delete the ready page select it from ready pages. It opens on the work space. Click the button “Delete selected Page”



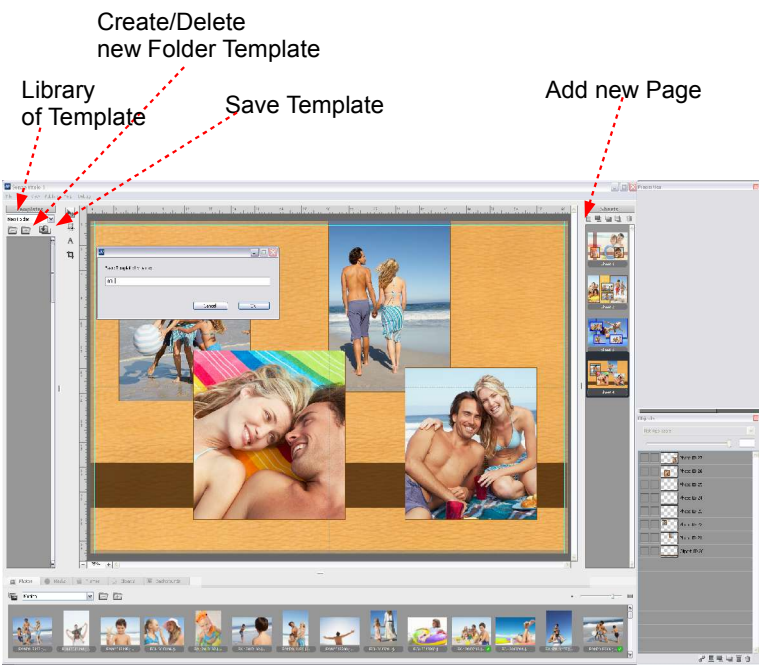
It is possible to change the position of the pages using that scroll menu:

* select desired page;
* click with the right key of the mouse on the thumbnail of it;
* choose the desired action/position for this page.

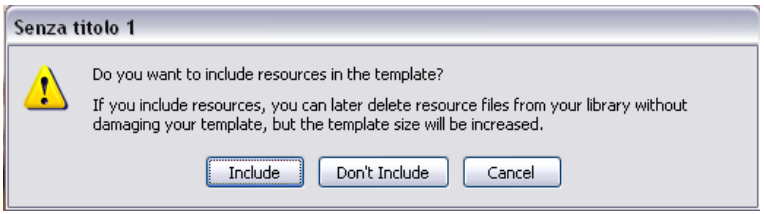


7.0 How to create and save new template

1. Open a new blank page clicking on the button Add a new Page.
2. Click the button “Create Photo Object” and and create one or more of them on the blank page.
3. Using the libraries of Album Express add masks, cliparts, frames, effects and background.
4. Create a new folder into “Library of Templates” clicking the button “Create a new folder of templates”.
5. Write a name for new folder.
6. Open it.
7. Click the button Save Template
8. Type a name of the template;
9.Click OK.



The following message will be shown:

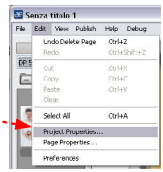

Senza titolo 1
Do you want to include resources in the template?
If you include resources, you can later delete resource files from your library without damaging your template, but the template size will be increased.
Include
Don't Include
Cancel

Choose some option to save it.

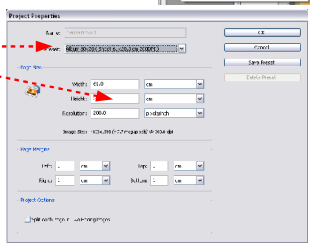
The new template will be saved. The thumbnail of the new template will be created automatically.

8.0 How to resize the project

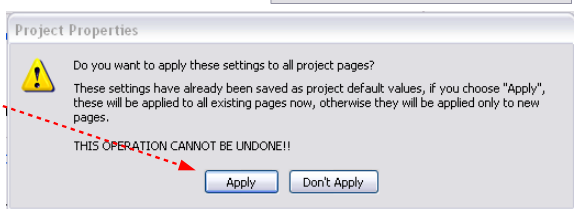
When you need to resize the project go to File – Edit - Project Properties...



Choose the size from the Custom Sizes or type your desired size here

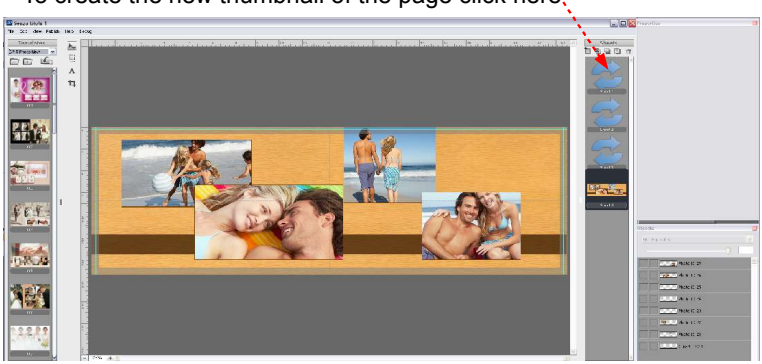


Click Apply


Project Properties
Do you want to apply these settings to all project pages?
These settings have already been saved as project default values, if you choose "Apply", these will be applied to all existing pages now, otherwise they will be applied only to new pages.
THIS OPERATION CANNOT BE UNDONE!!
Apply
Don't Apply

Note: The project was resized. All objects and photos were resized proportionally.

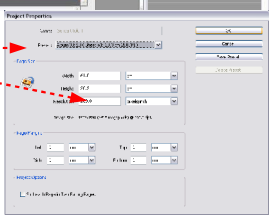
To create the new thumbnail of the page click here



9.0 How to add a page with another size or resize the page in the project

When you need to resize the project go to File – Edit - Project Properties...

Choose the size from the Custom Sizes or type your desired size here

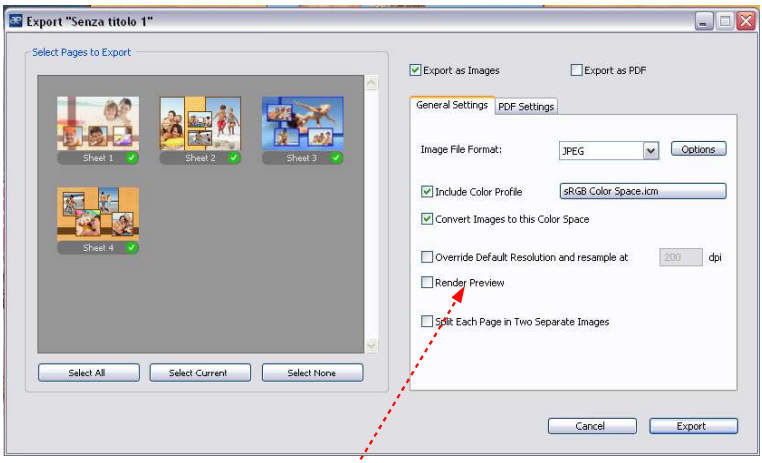


All objects and photos on the page will be resized proportionally.

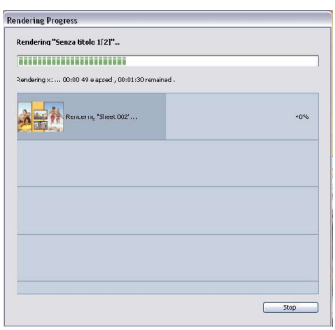
14.0 Export Project

1. Select menu File
2. Save project as...
3. Menu File - Export project.

The following window opens:



Here it is necessary to select:
* all pages or some ones;
* format of the exported file;
* split pages;
* export preview.



4.Click the button export.

5. Select a folder of the destination.

The application divides all available memory for 1.5 GB during the rendering . For example: the memory is 15GB : 1.5 GB. In this case 10 rendering processes (10 pages are exporting) are starting in the same time. The time of the rendering is reduced and the application doesn't crash.

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